



# 6 THE STEP SYSTEM

TO FINDING YOUR **PERFECT**

# **ACCOUNTANCY ROLE**

[BTG] RECRUITMENT

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# INTRODUCTION

Hello and welcome to our comprehensive guide on finding your perfect accountancy role.

We're glad you're here and we're confident that our step by step guide will give you everything you need to know to optimise your job search and land the accountancy job you're looking for.

BTG Recruitment are a specialist accountancy and finance recruiter and we're passionate about making sure you get the dream role that you really want, not just any old job. We listen to you and get to know you, making sure that we understand exactly what you want and where you hope to go with your career.

We understand the accountancy and finance sector because we've been there, and we know

what it's like to be out there looking for a better role in the current market.

This guide will take you through the whole job search process from start to finish, including the best way to prepare your CV, interview advice, career progression and more.

We hope you enjoy the guide, and we'd love to assist you in finding the perfect role for you. Contact us in Nottingham on 0115 960 7000 or Manchester on 0161 214 3840.

*Matthew Finch*

**Director, BTG Recruitment.**



# STEP 1.

## WHAT DO YOU WANT?

No, really, what do you want from your career? Where do you want to go?

We could jump in straight away with CV tips or talk about the best way to tackle tough interview questions, but none of that advice will get you very far if you don't know why you're doing this.

Your very first step should be to analyse your options and your preferences, and then you can look at the practical steps in terms of how to get there.

Without a plan, you'll have no idea whether that interesting looking role that's only a 10 minute walk from your house will really give you what you need to advance your career.

Think about what is important to you in your life. Money is nice, of course, but without job satisfaction it can be a pretty empty thing, and it's unlikely to be enough on its own.

Do you want a job that offers flexibility, with the opportunity to work from home sometimes,

flexible start times, or particular benefits, like private medical care for your whole family?



Is career progression important to you? That might sound like a silly question, but some people really are genuinely happy with a job that they thoroughly enjoy, rather than thinking about climbing the corporate ladder. If that's you, then that's perfectly acceptable, as long as you're clear on what works for you.

What role do you ultimately want? If you're aiming to be the CFO of a large international corporation, for example, you've got some work to do if you're currently a payroll clerk, and

without knowing your 'WHY' and having a plan to get there, you're going to struggle.

So first thing first, before we talk negotiation techniques for a bigger salary when you reach that CFO position, write down how you really feel about your career, what you want for your life in the future and what your ideal timeline is for everything to happen.

If you get really clear on what's important to you, that will colour everything that follows, from how you write your CV, to the job that you finally accept, and where you end up in the future.



# STEP 2.

## WHERE ARE YOU NOW?

If you're already in a job, it can be all too easy to get comfortable and settle for what you've got.

It's not easy finding another job in any market, and finding the perfect one can take time.

The best way to start is by looking at your reason for leaving and if leaving really does fit in with your career plan.

Is there progression in your current role? Can you clearly see how you can grow with your current company? Can you get the experiences you need to advance and achieve your goals?

If the answer to these questions is 'no', then even if you love everything else about your job, it's likely time to move on; though before you make the change, ensure that you're not just having a bad time at the moment, and that you're not only looking at minor niggles like a colleague who insists on having the window open all winter, or a longer trip to get to work than you'd like. Will leaving really get you further along your career path?

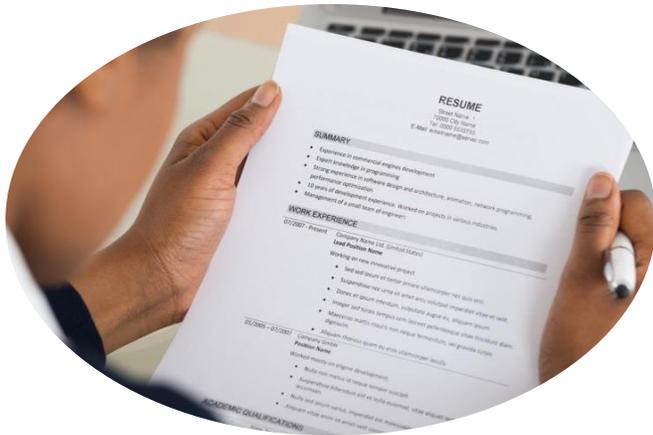
Here's the real benefit of understanding why you want to leave. You can look at potential roles with a clear view of whether they can give you what

you are missing in your current job and make the best possible decision.

When you're working with a recruiter, ask a lot of questions about each role they propose for you. Will it give you the management opportunity you're looking for? Is the reporting structure what you want and will it give you the chance to regularly work with the directors or the MD? Is there clear progression? Will you get training or the chance to take a qualification you need to move up?

Thinking tactically can save you time attending interviews for jobs that you aren't totally convinced by, and make sure the opportunities you do look at are more likely to be perfect for you. And doing this will also give you a huge advantage during the interview itself, because when you are asked why you want this particular job you are already prepared and can talk enthusiastically about why this company is perfect for you and, of course, why you are perfect for them.

Leaving your job is a big decision but it's far worse to stay in a job that makes you unhappy: you don't want to spend your life wondering what might have been.



# STEP 3.

## CREATING A STUNNING CV

As experts in accountancy and finance recruitment, we often get asked what should go in the perfect CV, and here's our answer:

- **Contact Information**

It's really obvious, but we so often get CVs that have no contact details for the candidate, so double check that you have included everything.

Your email address should be a professional one - preferably your name rather than 'mrfunkytown' at your email provider. It's part of the great first impression that you're trying to create, and it does matter. As does having a professional answerphone message.

- **Start with now**

List your current job first, with the rest of your experience in reverse chronological order. Clients are more interested in your recent experience, rather than the fact that you had a short career as a cook 20 years ago. Your recent work is also most likely to be relevant to the job you are applying for.

- **Spell it out**

Don't assume that everyone has heard of your current employer and what they do. Start with a short description of what the company does or its sector, with details of turnover and if it is part of a group.

State what level of person you report to and if you manage a team, and list your current tasks and responsibilities.

This really is not the place to be shy. List your greatest achievements, using hard facts like how much time you saved, how much money you saved or how much profit you made for the company.

Show your progression, too, especially if you're aiming to get a promotion with your next job. Clients want to see that evidence. If you've been in your role for a long time, break it up into sections, adding in where your role changed focus or you were given more responsibility. That's a great way to show you have developed in your role, even if you haven't been promoted.

- ***Make it easy to read***

Don't cram everything on to one side of A4. Use bullet points to make it easy to scan through, and leave a lot of white space as it's easier on the eye.

Provide a top summary of your skills and experience, writing it like a press release with the most important information at the top.

Provide a brief summary of what you did, just enough to provoke the client's interest, leading them to invite you to discuss the finer details of how you did it at interview.

Definitely do a final proof read, spell check and grammar check. First impressions count and, particularly with accountancy, prospective employers need to see that you can be accurate.

- ***Make it relevant***

Your CV is a sales document and you need to tailor it for each role you apply for.

Highlight the most important experiences and achievements, depending on the job you are going for and remove, or, at least, put more towards the bottom, the experience that isn't as relevant.

Spending a bit of time tailoring your CV for each specific role will significantly increase your chances of securing an interview.



# STEP 4.

## HOW TO SEARCH

Accountancy is a highly competitive job market with only a limited number of positions, particularly at the higher levels, so you need to give yourself the best possible chance of finding your ideal role.

Here are our top six tips to help you secure your perfect next step accountancy role:

### **1. Fill up your inbox**

Sign up to the main job sites and set up alerts for the roles you are looking for. Either set up rules so that all leads go into one folder or use a separate email address for this, so your job possibilities don't end up buried under your personal emails.

It might take a little while to get the alerts right that you receive, but keep tweaking them until they are producing the right leads.

### **2. Get social**

LinkedIn is an obvious place to start, so make sure your profile is up-to-date, really well written

and error free, and that it reflects the kind of role you are looking for. Join accountancy groups on LinkedIn and keep your eyes open for opportunities.

Don't forget the other platforms, though. Twitter and Facebook can be great places to spot new opportunities. Again, make sure your profiles work for you, not against you, and follow recruitment agencies, accountancy news platforms, and any companies that appeal to you as a place to work.

### **3. Graduate fairs**

While these might be aimed at recent students, HR managers do attend these events, so why shouldn't you and your highly-polished CV?

You might not get to hear about the kind of job you're looking for at these events, but you will make connections and get your name and face in front of people who matter for future opportunities.

#### **4. Do your research**

Save yourself a lot of legwork and time by researching whether the job available matches what you need and will get you where you want to go. Do your research on what the company is looking for so you can tailor your CV to fit and target the organisation properly.

**Tip:** Save each version of your CV, so you have it for next time a similar job comes along.

#### **5. Use your personal network**

Whether you're a member of a professional accountancy body, or a general networking group, get yourself out there and talk to people.

Chat and build relationships and listen as much as you talk to find out what's happening in other companies, who is leaving, where the openings are and who is involved.

It's a great excuse to have a catch up with old friends from previous jobs and you might just find they have exactly what you're looking for.

And, of course, take advantage of the specialist knowledge a financial and accounting recruitment agency has to land yourself the perfect job. Sign up with the kind of agency that cares about you and what you want, and has the experience to deliver.



# STEP 5.

## INTERVIEW ADVICE

You could be the most experienced accountant in the world, with the best CV your prospective employer has ever seen; you just know you're perfect for the role and that you can smash every target they could give you, but... then there's the interview to get through, and no matter how many times you've gone through this, you can still feel those sweaty palms and knocking knees.

There's a lot of pressure, there's no doubt, especially if this really is the big one; the final interview before you land that long-dreamed-of CFO role, but if you prepare properly, you really will be fine.

First of all, start well before you get to the interview. Preparation is the key to confidence, and the more you know about the job, the company and the people, the more confident you will be, and the easier the interview will go.

As we said above, do your research. See who is interviewing you and who you would be working for and look at their social media profiles and their interests. Find out about their experience and their likes and dislikes.

They'll have done all that for you, so even things out and make sure you know just as much about them.

Learn everything you can about the company. Look at their press attention, their social media, what they do and what people say about them.

What are the gaps in their achievements that you can fill? That one extra step that a lot of candidates just don't take the time to do could be what gets you hired. It shows you're keen to impress, that you really do want the job and that you more than have the experience they need.

While you're learning what you need to know about the job and the company, don't forget to prepare yourself, too. You'll need to know how to answer those tough questions, and the best way to do that is to know your own CV inside out.

What makes you exceptional? What really does make you the best person for the job? List your strengths and think about what you can say in the interview to illustrate them.

You know that you'll also be asked about your weaknesses, so prepare for the question. Ask your friends and family to help you with this if you need to. When you answer the question at interview, be honest and take responsibility. If you made a mistake, what did you do to put it right, and how are you trying to improve personally and professionally? Don't bring this up, however, if the interview panel doesn't, and only mention one weakness.

Think things through before you go to the interview, and look at what you would ask in this situation and what you'd be looking for if you were the interviewer. Consider your own experience of interviewing people and think about what you'd want to hear. This should give you the final piece you need to give the best possible performance at interview.



# STEP 6.

## YOU GOT THE JOB, NOW GET THE RIGHT PACKAGE

Negotiating can be nearly as nerve-wracking as the interview itself, but remember that you got the job because you are highly-experienced and you deserve to be here, and that should give you more confidence.

Employers will consider market value when offering a salary for a role. They look at what other accountants with similar qualifications and experience are earning and what the typical salary is for a particular level.

That doesn't mean that there's no room to manoeuvre, however.

First and foremost, do your research before you start. Know what the going rate is and your own value, and don't undersell yourself. If you get less than you know you deserve, you're likely to resent it down the road, and it may not be so easy to get a salary increase once you're in position.

Once you have your offer, ask for more. There's really no harm in doing so. The worst thing they

can do is say 'no', and considering that they went through all that costly candidate search to hire you, they're not going to suddenly refuse to employ you just for asking the question. Just be confident and calm, not pushy or aggressive, and state your case for why you should receive more.

Don't talk about family or money problems and be over personal to try and push your new company into giving you more money. They really won't appreciate it. Just be professional.

It's also worth being open to non-cash negotiations, because while there may not be the budget to give you your ideal salary, you may be able to get added value another way, with stock options, gym memberships, a company car or other benefits.

### *Finally...*

You've got your ideal job, negotiated your perfect salary and you're just dying to get started, but before you do, make sure you have a formal offer letter, a detailed job description and a full

description of your proposed package. Dot the i's and cross the t's at this point, and you can then be sure that both you and your employer know what you're getting.

If you're unsure, or you've never negotiated a salary before, a specialised accountancy recruiter

will be able to help you with finding out all the details you need, such as the current market rate for your job. They will also be able to help you with career coaching and building confidence, so do take advantage of that.

# Conclusion

There's more to getting the perfect job than just producing a shiny CV, so plan thoroughly for what you want and how to get it, do your research, know your value and be confident that you are the best person for the job.

We wish you the very best of luck in your job search, and if you'd like some more help, please do get in touch with us.

"As one of BTG's candidates, they treated my job search with integrity and honesty. It is refreshing to find a recruiter who listens well to what the candidate needs and helps them on their career path efficiently and professionally without compromising the candidate's requirements." - Davina Webb, Financial Accountant at Brammer Group

Want to take your career further? Contact us in Nottingham on **0115 960 7000** or Manchester on **0161 214 3840**

# BTG Recruitment

We are one of the best known independent Accountancy and Finance Recruitment consultancies in the East Midlands and North West. Placing 100's of finance directors, accountants, part qualified accountants and clerical accounts staff into their ideal career paths.

At BTG Recruitment we are passionate about helping accountants advance their careers; we have helped hundreds of candidates on their career journey, introducing them to opportunities that they never felt possible.

## Just another agency?

The team and I work with you on an individual level, to find out what you want; it's your search and it's IMPORTANT.

Do you want someone who will work with you to advance your career and help you formulate a plan to achieve your goals?

## Ready to have a conversation?

You can rely on all the team at BTG Recruitment to support you.

## Remember .....

- All our consultants are experts in accountancy and finance recruitment and have in-depth sector knowledge
- We listen to you and find out exactly what you want from your next career move
- Because of our experience and connections we have access to some of the best accountancy and finance opportunities around.

## What next?

Fancy a confidential conversation? You can call me direct on **0115 960 7000** or **0161 214 3840**.

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